

Secondat (C de) Baron de Montesquieu

OBSERVATIONS

ON

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GOVERNMENT;

Occasioned by the late

DISPUTES

BETWEEN THE

KING OF *FRANCE*

AND HIS

CLERGY.

Translated from the *French*, published in *France*, and
written by the celebrated Baron de MONTESQUIEU,
Author of the *Persian Letters*, and the *Spirit of Laws*.

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M D C C L I.

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GOVERNMENT;
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KING OF FRANCE
AND
GEORGE THE THIRD



Printed and Sold by the Author, at the Sign of the Crown, in Pall-mall, and at the Sign of the Anchor, in St. James's Street, London.

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M D C C L I I



THE
VOICE
OF THE
WISEMAN
AND OF THE
PEOPLE.

THE Goodness of a Government consists in protecting and containing within proper Bounds the several Professions of the State.

No Government can be good in which there is not a sole supreme Power.

In the most mixt States the Power results from the Consent of several Orders, and then it acquires it's Unity, without which all is Confusion.

In any State whatever the greatest Unhappiness consists in having the Legislative Power opposed, The happy Years of our Monarchy were the last Years of *Henry* the IVth, and the Years under *Lewis* the XIVth and *Lewis* the XVth, when these Princes governed by themselves.

There ought not to be two Powers in one State.

The

The Distinction between Spiritual Power and Temporal Power is a Remainder of *Vandal*-Barbarousness. 'Tis the same Thing as if there were two Masters in my House; I that am the Father of the Family; and He that is the Tutor of my Children, and is paid by me. I would have the Tutor of my Children respected; but I would by no means suffer him to have the least Authority in my House.

There are in the whole World four States that are of the Roman Catholic Religion; *France*, the *Spanish* Provinces, one half of *Germany*, and *Poland*.

In the *Spanish* Provinces, the Government concerts with the Pope the Taxes that are to be laid on the Clergy.

The

The Queen of *Hungary* acts in the same Manner: In the last War she obtained leave to seize on the Plate belonging to Churches.

In *Poland*, the Crown-Army lives at Discretion on the Lands of the Clergy, because what the Clergy pays to the Republic is too inconsiderable.

In *France* Reason improves daily, and teaches, that the Church ought to contribute, in Proportion to its Income, towards defraying the Expence of the State; and that the Body which is particularly appointed to teach Justice should be the first to give the Example of it.

It were a Government fit for the *Hottentots*, that should allow any certain Number of Men to say; "Those
" that

“ that work are those that ought to
 “ pay: We owe nothing because we
 “ are idle.”

That Government were offensive
 both to God and Men where some Ci-
 tizens might say; “ The State hath
 “ given us all, and we owe it no-
 “ thing but Prayers.”

Reason, in Proportion as it draws
 towards its Perfection, destroys the
 Seed of Religious Wars: The Philo-
 sophical Spirit alone hath expelled
 that Plague out of the World.

Should *Luther* and *Calvin* come
 again into the World, they would be
 as little noticed as the *Scotists* and
Thomists. And why? Because the
 Light spread through all Conditions
 hath taught us, that we ought never
 to rise against the Religion of the
 Prince; and that rising against it
 causes

causes dreadful Calamities for whole Ages after.

It is only in barbarous Ages that we hear of Sorcerers--of Dæmoniacs --of Kings excommunicated--of Subjects freed from their Oath of Allegiance by Doctors.

Reason teaches us that the Prince may let some old Abuses remain ; such as suffering certain Affairs to be decided by the Court of *Rome*, which might full as well be decided in his own Council.

It shews that whenever the Prince thinks proper to abolish that Practice, it will fall like a *Gothic* Building, which is thrown down to be rebuilt in the modern Taste.

It shews that when the Prince is pleased to extirpate a noxious Abuse, the

the People ought, and really will, agree to it, were that Abuse of four thousand Years standing.

This Reason teaches us, that the Prince ought to be the absolute Master of all Ecclesiastical Polity, without any Restriction whatever, because this Ecclesiastical Polity is a Part of the Government; and that in the same Manner as the Father of a Family marks down to the Tutor of his Children their Hours of Work, and the Kind of Studies they are to pursue, &c; In the same Manner the Prince may prescribe to all Churchmen without Exception, whatever has the least Relation to public Order.

This Reason tells us all, that whenever the Prince will judge it proper to grant to those who have
B
spilled

spilled their Blood for the State, Pensions on Ecclesiastical Livings, which Livings are Part of the Patrimony of the State, not only the Military Officers, but all People in Business, all the Citizens will bless the Prince; and that whosoever should oppose so salutary an Institution would be looked upon as an Enemy to his Country.

In like Manner, whenever the Prince, who is the Shepherd of his People, sets about encreasing his Flock as he ought; whenever he thinks proper to restore to the Right of following the Dictates of Nature, such imprudent Men and Women as have devoted themselves to the Extinction of their Kind, and made a Vow fatal to the Common-wealth, in an Age when it is not lawful to dispose of one's Property, the Society will for ever bless such a Prince.

There

There is a Convent useleſs to the World in all Reſpects, which hath an Income of two hundred thouſand Livres; now Reason demonſtrates that if theſe two hundred thouſand Livres were given to an hundred Officers, who ſhould be obliged to marry, then there would be an hundred good Citizens rewarded, an hundred Girls provided for, and at the End of ten Years, four hundred Souls more at leaſt in the State, inſtead of fifty idle People; It demonſtrates beſides, that theſe fifty idle People reſtored to their Country would plough the Ground and ſtock it with Inhabitants, and that we ſhould have a greater Number of Manufacturers and Soldiers: This is what every Perſon wiſhes for, from the Prince of the Blood to the Vine-Labourer; To this, Superſtition alone

lone formerly made an Opposition;
but Reason submitted to Faith
crushes Superstition,

The Prince may, by a single Word, prevent at least that Vows should be made before the Age of Twenty-five: And should any one ask the Sovereign, what will become of the Daughters of People of Rank which are sacrificed to the Fortunes of the eldest Sons? the Prince will answer; that they will be on the same Footing as those in *Sweden*, in *Denmark*, in *Prussia*, in *England*, in *Holland*; that they will encrease the Number of Citizens, as being born for that very Purpose, and not for repeating over *Latin*, which they do not understand; and that one Woman, by rearing up two Children and by Spinning, does greater Service to her Country than can ever be done by all the Convents put together.

It were a great Blessing for the Prince and the Common-wealth that there should be a Number of Philosophers inculcating all these Maxims in the Minds of their Fellow-Creatures.

Philosophers having no personal Interest can speak only in Behalf of Reason and of Public Interest.

Philosophers do Service to Princes in destroying Superstition, which is for ever the Enemy of Princes,

It was Superstition which caused the Murder of *Henry* the III^d, of *Henry* the IVth, of *William* Prince of *Orange*, and of so many others. From it sprang Rivers of Blood since the Reign of *Constantine*.

Super-

Superstition is the most dangerous Enemy to Human-kind ; when it governs the Prince it hinders him from promoting the Good of his People ; when it governs the People it makes them rise against their Prince.

The Opposition of Philosophers to the Laws of their Prince is without Example : A single Age cannot be found in which Superstition and Enthusiasm have not caused most dreadful Havock.

There is no Example of Troubles and Dissentions happening when the Prince hath been absolute Master of the Ecclesiastical Polity : We hardly meet with any Thing else but Disturbances and Calamities, when

when Churchmen were not entirely subject to the Prince.

The happiest Thing that can happen to the human Race is, that the Prince should be a Philosopher.

The Prince-Philosopher knows, that the greater Progress Reason makes in his Dominions, the less Mischief will be done by Disputes, Theological Jarrings, Enthusiasm, or Superstition; He will therefore promote the Progress of Reason.

This Progress alone will prove sufficient, for Instance, to stop all Disputes on Grace; because the Number of rational Men being encreased, the Number of Wrong Minds which feed on absurd Opinions, must be lessened.

What

What we call a Janfenist, is really a Madman, a bad Citizen, and a Rebel. He is a Madman, because he takes some singular Notions for demonstrated Truths: Should he make Use of his Reason he would learn that Philosophers never did, nor ever could, dispute on a demonstrated Truth: Were he to make Use of his Reason, he would know, that a Sect which brings on Convulsions, is a Sect of Madmen. He is a bad Citizen, because he disturbs the Order of Society. He is a Rebel because he disobeys.

Molinists are Madmen of a milder Kind. We ought to be neither of *Apollos* or of *Cephas*; but of God, and of the King.

'Tis

'Tis certain that the greater the Number of Philosophers is, the more Remedies there will be against Folly.

The Prince philosopher will encourage that Religion which always teaches a Morality pure and useful to Men. He will prevent Disputes on speculative Points, because nothing but Mischief ever ensued from such Disputes.

He will render, as much as is in his Power, distributive Justice more uniform and less tedious ; and will blush for our Forefathers, that what is true at *Dreux* should be false at *Pontoise*.

The Prince Philosopher will be convinced that the more laborious
C and

and industrious a Nation is, the greater must be its Wealth. He will take Care that his Cities should be embellished ; because then there will be more Work ; and that the Result will be both useful and pleasant.

A large Book could be written on all the Good that might be done ; but a Prince-Philosopher stands in no need of a large Book.

F I N I S.

